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Honorary Degree Citation: Dr. Margaret Burroughs

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Granted 2007

Dr. Margaret Burroughs

Measuring the impact and importance of Dr. Margaret Burroughs' influence on our society, culture, and history only requires a review of her many accomplishments and far-reaching influence.

The quest for an education directed Dr. Margaret Burroughs' parents to move the family from their home in Louisiana to Chicago where Dr. Burroughs worked hard to fulfill her parents' dream and her own. She graduated from Englewood High School, Chicago Teacher's College (renamed Chicago State University), and the Art Institute of Chicago. Education remained a primary focus of Dr. Burroughs through years of teaching art at both the elementary school level and at DuSable High School.

The desire to educate, enlighten, and inform did not remain confined within the walls of Dr. Burroughs' classroom. More than 60 years ago, when she was only 22, Dr. Burroughs helped found the South Side Community Arts Center, which offers gallery space, studios, and workshops to community artists and students. She continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the Center.

In 1961, she and her husband, Charles Burroughs, founded the Ebony Museum of African-American History on the first floor of their Chicago home. The museum was dedicated to the posterity and preservation of African American history and art. It has since been relocated to Washington Park and renamed the DuSable Museum of African American History. It is an internationally recognized resource with education programs, visiting exhibits, and a permanent collection of more than 13,000 artifacts, artworks, and books.

In addition to the Center and the museum, Dr. Burroughs' creativity and commitment to the arts is illustrated by her stories, poetry, and artwork. Her published works include three children's books and two books of poetry. Dr. Burroughs has worked in sculpture, painting, and printmaking. Her work has been featured in exclusive shows at the Corcoran Art Galleries in Washington, D.C., the DuSable Museum in Chicago, and the Studio Museum in New York City.

Dr. Burroughs has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades honoring her as both an artist and a humanitarian. In 1975, she received the President's Humanitarian Award. She was named one of Chicago's Most Influential Women by the Chicago Defender in 1977 and February 1, 1986 was designated "Dr. Margaret Burroughs' Day" in Chicago by Mayor Harold Washington..

Today, Governors State University proudly bestows the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, on Dr. Margaret Burroughs for her creative, inspired, and continual commitment to the arts and humanity and to the improvement of the condition of life for all people.

Passed away 11-21-10